



## Q&A: Joel Grimes

JEFF KIDA, PHOTO EDITOR

**JK: How did this photo come together?**

**JG:** I've done a lot of portrait photography in my career, but usually it's with a single subject. This time, I had the idea of photographing a cowboy — in this case, Greg Wildman — with a horse. I always tell people that the technical part of photography is the easy part. The challenge is putting everything together in preparation for the shoot. I spent two weeks scouting, securing the horse and dealing with other logistics.

**JK: What are some of the challenges?**

**JG:** Horses often don't like to stand still. You get a horse in the position you want, and then it wants to move again. It's a constant dance of trying to get the horse and the cowboy in the right spots. I would have Greg walk the horse in a 40-foot loop and come back to their spots, and then I would make a few photos before the horse got restless again. I also used a strobe with a medium softbox, which can sometimes startle a horse.

**JK: Tell me more about your use of strobes.**

**JG:** It's just part of my comfort zone. By directing light at the subject's face, I'm able to control the quality of the light and also knock down the background. With only natural light, the background would be

much brighter. This way, I'm able to draw the viewer's attention to right where I want it. Arizona generally has very harsh sunlight, and my job is to work around that harshness and build a little drama, much like a landscape photographer looks for dramatic light or weather when composing a photograph.

**JK: Is this a single exposure?**

**JG:** It is, but I wanted a little more texture to the sky, so I added some wispy clouds later. It's so subtle that it barely shows, but I think it adds a lot to the photo.

**JK: What do you like about this particular shot?**

**JG:** I made some shots of Greg when he was facing the camera, and they looked a little staged. When he and the horse both looked away, Greg's jawline and the harshness of his face stood out, and I knew that was the shot. Because of my use of strobes, my work is contrived, in a way, but you wait for that moment when it doesn't look contrived — the subject relaxes, or they turn or lean a certain way. This was the one. I printed this one and hung it above my fireplace, and if a photographer does that with their own work, you know they must like it a lot.



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